



Tennessee First to the Top Monthly Update

June – July 2012

- **Standards and Assessments** –The state convened its first meeting of the English Language Arts (ELA) Leadership Team at the end of May. This group recruited and finalized a list of 60 districts who agreed to participate in this school year's Common Core ELA pilot. These districts agreed to pilot a revised writing assessment several times a year and use sets of online modules with school staff. The ELA Leadership Team led meetings in each Grand Division of the state for these 60 pilot districts. The department also trained a committee of textbook reviewers on new instrument aligned to Common Core that will be utilized for the upcoming reading textbook adoption.

The Common Core Leadership Council met in Nashville during the weekend of June 15th to continue planning for the upcoming math trainings. The state's team of Core Coaches prepared for trainings by gathering in Nashville for three days followed by two days of regional training where they finalized content and practiced facilitation. This work culminated in the launch of the state's first phase of Common Core training, focused on grades 3-8 math. By the end of the third week of training on July 26th, the state anticipates training approximately 13,000 teachers.

- **Data**—Data for the first phase of the P-20 system has been validated by the providing agencies. Second phase data elements have been defined and include GED data, teacher license data, student attendance, ACT / SAT data, and FAFSA information. These elements are in the process of being extracted from the host agencies and transformed into the P-20 warehouse.

On June 15th the department released value added data, the earliest release of this data in state history. The TVAAS data was loaded into the evaluation data system for educators to access. Department staff are also working to further refine the evaluation data system to improve its' functionality for use in the next school year.

- **Teachers and Leaders**—Evaluation staff completed one round of TEAM training for new evaluators, recertification training, and administrator and alternate rubric training in June. TEAM staff also conducted extensive analysis on the evaluation data and combined that information with feedback collected from educators throughout the year to develop its report on year one of implementation. The report, which can be found [here](#), contains information regarding accomplishments, trends in the feedback collected from educators, and

recommended next steps. TEAM staff are also working with several districts to plan for a pilot of student surveys to be used as an evaluation component next year.

Several First to the Top projects conducted summer training programs throughout the months of June and July. The SITES M program completed its summer institute training program for all teacher participants at Tennessee State University on June 22nd. The Teach TN program also completed induction programming for the new Commissioner's and Governor's Fellows.

Department staff completed site visits to all of the Teacher and Principal Residency grant recipients and has begun to share feedback with programs from these visits. Additionally, programs are required to submit their year-end performance reports by July 27th. Support and planning webinars have continued throughout June and July to support those districts interested in applying for the second round of Innovation Acceleration Funding.

- **Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools**—The Achievement School District (ASD) began its teacher induction programming for its 80 new teachers on July 9th. Teachers, along with all members of the ASD support staff, participated in community walks through the Frayser neighborhood introducing themselves to families and getting students registered for school. Additionally, the ASD staff began work on several campus beautification projects at the three Achievement schools and held a Frayser community picnic on July 21st.

ASD principals attended further University of Virginia (UVA) Turnaround training during July. The ASD also released an application seeking members for its Achievement Advisory Council (AAC). This council, intended to include parents, community members and educators, and potentially students, will be responsible for acting as a thought partner to the Achievement School District as communities engage in a process to appropriately “match” charter operators with school sites.

All Renewal Schools submitted their year-end performance reports which department staff are reviewing in conjunction with student achievement data. Finally, the Tennessee College Access and Success Network (TCASN) received official non-profit status in June, allowing the organization to begin seeking external funding.

- **STEM**—The first STEM Leadership Academy was held by Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) from June 26-28th. Representatives from all the funded regional hubs attended and presented on their hub activities and future plans. Hub leaders also attended the national STEM X conference held by Battelle Memorial to share out on the Tennessee Network's progress as well as connect with other state's engaging in this work. Finally, Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) staff are working to conduct site visits to the first round STEM PD grantees.